

FROM SHERMAN'S ARMY.

The Battle of Bentonville—The Splendid Conduct of Our Troops—The Splendid Corps Principally Engaged.

GRANDBRIDGE, N. C., Friday, March 24, 1865.

The great battle that was to astonish the world has actually taken place, and for the first time which it lasted, and the desperation of the Rebels to succeed, it certainly was more than an average exhibition of Rebel pluck. Gen. Johnston and the other magnates of the Confederacy had made every effort to thoroughly imbue their deceived troops with the belief that Sherman's army would be utterly and overwhelmingly annihilated. Laboring under this delusion the soldiers of Davis fought with courage and devotion worthy of a better cause. They were commanded by the best Generals in the Confederacy; but with all their superior advantages, they were unable to hold their intrenchments against the furious onsets of the Army of the Tennessee.

THE POSITION AND LOCALITY OF THE FIGHT.

Bentonville is a small village of only eight or ten houses, situated on Mill Creek, in Johnston County, North Carolina. It is four miles south of the Neuse River, and twenty miles east of Goldsboro. The creek is a shallow stream, meandering through the counties of Wayne and Johnston, and finally empties into the Neuse River. It is skirted generally by wide low lands, and in some parts there are considerable swamps. I should here observe that this creek is fordable by infantry at any point, not being more than forty feet in width, but impassable by artillery, except on the bridge.

The line of battle of the enemy was in front of an extensive swamp, and was our miles in length. It was very difficult to cross this swamp with artillery. To the right and left is a succession of hills, which were occupied by the Confederates.

These positions possessed great advantages, and every soldier, from the Generals down to the privates, appreciated the strength of the ground, and anticipated an easy victory behind their splendid barbed wire entanglements.

Our line of battle was of course nearly opposite that of the enemy, and stretched along the margin of the swamp, until lost to view among the distant woods.

THE PRELIMINARY SYMPTOMS OF THE BATTLE.

As early as twelve o'clock on Monday, when the enemy opened a vigorous fire on the advance guard of the Fifth Corps. For several hours this pistol skirmishing was actively carried on, but without any result that was of the slightest importance. At three o'clock a large body of our skirmishers advanced, and soon after the main body of Logan's Corps was hurled against the Rebel force. The fire became fearful and incessant. What was at first distinct, clear and concise, merged into a tumultuous roar, and the discharge of musketry sounded upon the ear like the rolling of a thousand distant drums, and the cheers of our boys told us of some advantage gained. We who were upon the scene could see little or nothing of this portion of the battle, but from the dense pall of smoke that hung over the scene, we knew too well that the bloody work was going on. The Rebels outnumbered us. Their best troops were concentrated against us. For an hour the tide of battle ebbed and flowed alternately. Our boys fought gallantly, and met the iron storm with confidence and composure. For a minute the Rebels apparently repulsed us. It was a trying moment. At this juncture Logan ordered the support of Wood's division of Gen. Case. Splendidly handled, the reinforcement swept on like a wave, its blows falling thick and fast upon the Rebels, who had so stubbornly held their positions.

Half an hour later and the enemy was retreating. We pursued him for a mile and our troops seized the contested ground. The success was as complete as it was possible to make it in view of the peculiar circumstances of the fight and the topography of the country. Certain it is, that after the cessation of the fight, the Rebels did not retreat again during the evening. In the night the Rebels retreated across the swamp, and took refuge in their main line of works. The Rebels also dug entrenchments. These works were formidable, being protected by abatis and chevaux-de-frise. With the first streak of day the volleys of musketry poured into our ranks, announced the battle begun, and for an hour the constant succession of rifle balls was uninterrupted except by their own echoes. Johnston had initiated the attack. Blair, with his noble corps, had arrived, and was in position on our extreme right. Blair commanded on the right and Logan on the left. The command of Blair was composed of three divisions as follows:—

Logan's corps was composed of Hazen's, Woods', Case's and Smith's five divisions. These troops held the extreme left, and were opposed to the right wing of the enemy, which occupied a strong position. These two corps constituted the Army of the Tennessee, commanded by that intrepid officer Major-General Howard.

The battle commenced in earnest at 11 o'clock on the extreme right, and was taken up with each succeeding division, and in an hour the wave of battle rolled from one end of the line to the other. The enemy had massed a heavy force on the right and maintained his position with so much stubbornness that Mower was ordered up to check or repulse him. We moved forward in superb style, and fell upon the enemy like a thunderbolt, but the Rebel column still stood their ground, and fought with desperate gallantry. In the morning Logan had been steadily pushing back the enemy. Under his orders Hason had executed a flank movement, opening up communication with the left wing. Gen. Logan had a difficult task.

He pressed the enemy sorely from the start, compelling him to fall back gradually. The gallant Case fought his division with great skill and bravery. The troops of his command formed the left wing of Grant's army at Fort Donelson, and have distinguished themselves in all the battles of the North-West. The noble division of Wood carried the last intrenchments, and they slept upon the field with the wreath of victory crowning their brows. Hazen's division was on the left of Wood, and fought with its fringed and distinguished gallantry.

An intermission of an hour, during which time, as prisoners informed us, the enemy was heavily reinforced. For three successive hours there was kept up an unbroken roar of musketry, which, for its ferocity, exceeded anything I have ever heard. The very earth seemed to tremble beneath the deafening and incessant roar.

Notwithstanding the fatigue and well-earned exhaustion of our troops, they entered on this fight with an ardor and readiness, plainly indicating their unshaken determination to conquer or die. They were ordered to charge and drive the enemy from their works, and all the while under a most devouring fire of musketry.

They did not falter, however, but went forward in the very teeth of the enemy without so much as even the slightest hesitation. The conflict at 11 o'clock that night was terrible, the air being filled with missiles of death, every moment having its peculiar sound of terror, and every spot its sight of ghastly destruction. Never was a more glorious victory plucked from more desperate and threatening circumstances. The heroic battalions of Logan pressed on with unquenching valor, and a resistless courage, driving the enemy before them. Step by step, the enemy were driven back, his forts were taken, and the ground abandoned, occupied by our victorious troops. By 3 o'clock in the morning we had driven him two miles from his battle-ground.

The fighting of our men in driving the Rebels from their intrenchments on the night of the 21st, was magnificent, grand and terrible. They faced the whirlwind of iron and lead with all the composure of a summer's rain. Then came after charge, the gaps in our lines being immediately closed up, and the shout of conquering the battery of Logan's troops rose above the roar of artillery and musketry. The Rebels were still dark, and as the storm of bullets

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A resolution was adopted appropriating the sum of \$10,000 to be applied for the benefit of the Children's Aid Society.

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